

3-29-06

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-14 and 20-32 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Claims 1, 9 and 14 are amended, and Claims 31 and 32 are withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a nonelected invention. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following Remarks.

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4-10-06

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the March 15, 2006 telephone interview. The sum and substance of the interview is contained in the above Amendment and following Remarks.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because this Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) does not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration because the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) does not add claims without deleting a corresponding number of claims; and (d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary.

With respect to item (b) above, independent Claims 1, 9 and 14 that were searched and examined in the outstanding Office action defined a propeller shaft assembly comprising a tubular member or metal tube and a tubular support member disposed within the tubular member or metal tube having an inner surface forming a cylindrical cavity.

As amended herein, independent Claims 1, 9 and 14 more clearly define the feature of the cylindrical cavity being an empty cavity to more clearly distinguish this feature from the art cited in the outstanding Office action. It is respectfully submitted that the search of a cylindrical cavity recited in independent Claims 1, 9 and 14 that were considered by the Examiner in the outstanding Office action would encompass a cylindrical, empty cavity recited in the amended Claims 1, 9 and 14. Thus, a new search and/or consideration is not required by the Examiner with respect to amended Claims 1, 5 and 9 as amended herein. In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

I. Election/Restriction

The Office action asserts that Claims 31 and 32 are withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention. By this Amendment, Claims 31 and 32 are indicated